

# News from Ed Markey

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Tara McGuinness**

**May 3, 2005**

**202-225-2836**

## **A Call to Action: Rep. Markey, David Hyde Pierce and Alzheimer's families push to increase Alzheimer's Research Funding**

**WASHINGTON, DC** - Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA) and Representative Christopher Smith (R-NJ), chairs of the Bi-Partisan Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease, hosted the Alzheimer's Association and special guest David Hyde Pierce ("Dr. Niles Crane" on the hit T.V. Show *Frazier*) today to help raise awareness about Alzheimer's disease and discuss ways to make Alzheimer's research a national priority.

"It is time for us to truly recognize the importance of making Alzheimer's a national priority before it explodes into a national crisis," Rep. Markey stated. "By 2010, it is projected that 5.1 million Americans will have Alzheimer's. This staggering number can be prevented if we increase funding for research and find a cure before it is too late."

David Hyde Pierce emphasized concerns about caring for a new generation of seniors with Alzheimer's, stressing the ballooning costs associated with the disease that will hit Medicare and Medicaid.

"Medicare spends 3 times more on a beneficiary with dementia than on a beneficiary who is not cognitively impaired. Medicaid spends \$21 billion each year just on nursing home care for persons with dementia who have run out of money paying for their care. Left unchecked, Alzheimer's disease will bankrupt Medicare and Medicaid. But if we can find a way to delay onset and progression of the disease, even by a modest amount – we can achieve huge savings. If we can find those answers within 5 years, we can save Medicare \$51 billion a year by 2015."

Pierce was joined by Dr. Samuel Gandy, Vice Chair, Medical and Scientific Advisory Council Alzheimer's Association and several families who represent the face of Alzheimer's disease: Julie Noonan Lawson of East Sandwich, MA an Alzheimer advocate; Meryl Comer, an Emmy award winning reporter and caregiver for her husband; and Brandeis University Professor, Dr. Bernard Reisman, West Newton, MA. These families narrated the daily challenges that families living with Alzheimer's face.

Dr. Bernard Reisman, professor emeritus at Brandeis University and Alzheimer's patient spoke to the Task Force urging Congress to fund more research, "We know that scientists

are on the verge of finding ways to prevent and treat Alzheimer's and that the help and funding our government provides today may save future generations from this terrible thief that steals memories, disrupts careers and affects millions of families. If the research can proceed fast enough, there may be something that will make a difference for me, but I pray that the discoveries will come in time for the next generation. We are in a race against time. I desperately hope we can find a way to spare my children and grandchildren and others from this devastating disease."

"By coming together, sharing our stories and continuing to promote awareness of the disease we can hope that one day soon we can speak of Alzheimer's as a disease of the past," Markey concluded.

Reps. Markey, Smith and Burgess introduced the "Ronald Reagan Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act of 2005" in an effort to expand the federal government's efforts to find new ways to prevent, treat, and care for patients with Alzheimer's. The bill will make Alzheimer's research a national priority by doubling the funding for the National Institute on Health and directing these funds towards research, enhancing public awareness and education about the disease, and assisting caregivers of Alzheimer's patients.

For more information on Rep. Markey's fight to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease check out: [www.house.gov/markey](http://www.house.gov/markey).

\* \* \*